

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NIC-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 EB-11 SCEM-02 SCI-06 /186 W

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R 031700Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3837

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TANGIER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REACTIONS TO ARAB SUMMIT

1. SINCE END OF ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN ALGIERS ON NOV 28 LOCAL PRESS HAS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE FAVORABLE EDITORIAL ATTENTION TO "POSITIVE RESULTS" OF THIS MEETING; AMONG THESE RESULTS PRESS HAS FOCUSED ON CONFERENCE'S (A) REAFFIRMATION OF ARAB UNITY; (B) RECOGNITION OF PLO AS SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS; (C) REALISM AND PRAGMATISM, PARTICULARLY AS EVIDENCED BY THE "JUDICIOUS" USE OF THE "OIL WEAPON" (PRESS ALSO HAS EDITORIALIZED IN SUPPORT OF BOURGUIBA'S REFERENCE TO USE OF OIL AS "DOUBLE EDGED SWORD"); (C) EFFORTS TO ENGAGE EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE FOCUS, PRESS HAS ALSO EMPHASIZED "IMPORTANT" ROLE WHICH BOURGUIBA PLAYED DURING CONFERENCE, NOTING THAT CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS HAVE VINDICATED BOURGUIBA'S LONG-HELD VIEW THAT ARABS SHOULD EMPLOY "CARROT-

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STICK" APPROACH TO PALESTINE QUESTION.

2. VARIOUS EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE ECHOED ABOVE THEMES WITH MOST AGREEING THAT CONFERENCE WAS IMPORTANT SUCCESS FOR BOTH BOURGUIBA'S AND SADAT'S POLICY OF MODERATION AND COMPROMISE. MANY OF THESE SOURCES REITERATE VIEW EXPRESSED HERE FOLLOWING END OF RAMADAN WAR, THAT MODERATE ARABS MUST BEGIN TO SEE SOME RESULTS OF THEIR POLICY IN NEAR FUTURE OR RUN RISK THAT EXTREMISTS LIKE QADHAFI AND IRAQIS WILL BEGIN TO UNDERMINE CURRENT PRAGMATIC APPROACH OF ARABS. THESE SOURCES CONTINUE THAT IN LIGHT OF ARAB MODERATION, THE US HAS IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN CONVINCING ISRAEL OF NEED FOR EQUAL MODERATION AND THEY CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THAT UNLESS BASIC PROBLEM OF PALESTINIANS IS SOLVED NO SETTLEMENT INVOLVING ONLY ISRAEL, EGYPT, SYRIA AND JORDAN WILL BE VIABLE.
SEELYE

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